



## EXECUTIVE ORDER 13-48A

### ORDER REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE COUNTY'S SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS ACTION PLAN

#### PURPOSE:

- I. To address the importance of reducing climate change effects, to take action and help mitigate County government's impact on climate change by adopting and implementing the Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP), and to begin adaptation to the effects of global warming in County operations.
- II. This Executive Order renews the County's commitment to reduce government greenhouse gas emissions to twenty percent below year 2000 levels by 2020. With this Executive Order, the County implements a new Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP) that provides a strategic and systematic approach to integrate specific environmentally sustainable practices into County government operations. The SOAP establishes seven goals with measurable objectives and action items. The plan goals are:
  - a. Implement green building practices & use green materials;
  - b. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from County operations, especially transportation;
  - c. Conserve resources and use renewable energy technologies;
  - d. Reduce, recycle and repurpose waste;
  - e. Implement green purchasing practices;
  - f. Promote ecological preservation and healthy ecosystems; and
  - g. Lead by example.

#### DISCUSSION:

- I. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) continues to be the lead international authority on global climate change and received the Nobel Prize in 2007 for its work. The IPCC is a scientific and intergovernmental body established by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts<sup>1</sup>. The latest IPCC synthesis report, released in 2007, concludes that<sup>2</sup>:
  - a. Human activity has increased atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide to levels not seen in the past 650,000 years; and

<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) website, <http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2007 Synthesis Report

- b. There is over 90 percent certainty that most of the warming of the climate is due to human activity.

The impacts of climate change are evident today in higher global temperatures, increased frequency and intensity of storm events, sea level rise, and ocean acidification. Findings from the IPCC report *Climate Change 2001: The Scientific Basis*, and the U.S. National Research Council's report on *Climate Change Science. An Analysis of Some Key Questions*, include<sup>3</sup>:

- c. On the global average, the surface air temperature of the Earth has increased by about  $1.0 \pm 0.4^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $0.6 \pm 0.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) since the late 19th century;
- d. The decade of the 1990s was very likely the warmest decade in the instrumental record, which dates back to 1861;
- e. Global sea level has risen by between 4 and 8 inches (0.1 and 0.2 meters) during the past 100 years, and much of the increase is thought to be related to the rising global average temperature; and
- f. Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, ocean acidification has increased by 30%.

Snohomish County recognizes that the need for action on climate change is urgent. In 2012, the impacts of climate change were devastating in many parts of the United States and across the globe, including severe hurricanes, flooding and drought. These types of extreme weather events are becoming the new normal, and are indicative of weather events that will likely be much more common in the future. In its recently released *2012 Global Climate Report*, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric (NOAA) reported that 2012 was the warmest year on record in the contiguous 48 states, based on 118 years of temperature records dating back to 1895. The average temperature in the contiguous U.S. in 2012 was 55.3 degrees (3.2 degrees above normal<sup>4</sup>). Rising global temperatures is one of many climate change indicators that scientists continue to monitor.<sup>5</sup>

- II. Protection of the natural environment is a fundamental component of County operations and service for the Snohomish County community, and an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan. Goal NE 10 of the General Policy Plan is to "Help sustain Snohomish County's economy, environment, and communities by minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting clean energy development." Similarly, Objective NE 10.A, states the County should "Adopt practices for Snohomish County government services and operations that minimize greenhouse gas emissions."<sup>6</sup>

Implementing the SOAP will help reduce the County's impact on climate change and the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from government operations. In addition, the SOAP will, among other things:

- a. Make a positive impact on the natural environment and climate change;

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<sup>3</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research website and Climate Change Program Office.

<sup>4</sup> 2012 Global Climate Report, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), February 2013.

<sup>5</sup> 2012 Global Climate Report, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), February 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan, Natural Environment, NE-I (November 10, 2012) Executive Order 13-48A



- b. Create a “greener” environment for the health of workers, building occupants, and the environment;
- c. Increase energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste reduction in County facilities;
- d. Improve air quality and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated through County operations;
- e. Reduce County expenses;
- f. Encourage market growth for environmental products and services; and
- g. Increase employee awareness and participation in sustainable decision-making at work.

- III. The County Executive formed a Green Ribbon Climate Task Force in 2008 to develop recommendations for mitigation of community-wide greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change. Community members and leaders who comprised this Task Force proposed recommendations for greenhouse gas emissions reduction, both community-wide and in County government, to twenty percent below year 2000 levels by 2020.

In 2010, the County established a new Office of Energy and Sustainability to work on climate change and resource conservation issues. During that same year, the Office of Energy and Sustainability convened an inter-departmental “Green Team” to help develop the SOAP and to increase collaboration on environmental sustainability issues across departments and offices.

#### **ACTION:**

- I. The County is now taking further steps on climate change through continued leadership from the Office of Energy and Sustainability and implementation of the SOAP. With regard to the County’s carbon footprint, emission of greenhouse gases, and conservation of natural resources, the Office of Energy and Sustainability will:
- a. Work with County departments and offices to implement the goals, objectives, and strategies identified in the SOAP as directed by the County Executive;
  - b. Monitor and verify results of the SOAP, and recommend changes based on results to the plan to the County Executive;
  - c. Monitor the County’s use of alternative fuels, biodiesel, hybrid vehicles, and plug in hybrid electric vehicles;
  - d. Work with County departments and offices to reduce the amount resources consumed from County operations, including natural gas, electricity, and water;

- e. Work with County departments and offices to increase recycling and reduce solid waste generated through County operations;
  - f. Develop green building design and construction standards for County facilities. The Office of Energy and Sustainability shall consult with the Facilities Management Department and other County departments and offices to establish and implement green building design and construction practices for County facilities, pending adoption of standards;
  - g. Implement the County's environmentally preferable purchasing and product utilization policy (EPP) for County operations, with assistance from the Purchasing Division;
  - h. Develop policies, strategies, and practices for the County to adopt or undertake to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions; and
  - i. Develop adaptation and resiliency strategies, policies, and plans to prepare for the impacts of global warming.
- II. The Green Team will continue to convene under the direction of the County Executive via the Office of Energy and Sustainability in order to:
- a. Assist in the implementation of the goals, objectives, and strategies identified in the SOAP; and
  - b. Serve as a focus for discussion on how to reduce the County's impact on climate change and implement best practices for environmental sustainability.
- III. Departments and offices of the County should provide their full assistance and support to this initiative.

**CANCELLATION:**

1. This Executive Order will remain in effect until canceled or superseded.
2. This Executive Order supersedes Executive Order 07-48 dated July 20, 2007.

**APPROVED:**

Dated this 24th day of September, 2013.

  
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John Lovick  
County Executive